

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01
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O P 011119Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9005
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4365

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION: AUGUST 1, 1978 - 1200 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 4341 (DTG 311328Z JUL 78)

1. THE SECURITY SITUATION.

RIGHTIST MILITIAS AND SYRIAN FORCES CLASHED
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JULY 31 IN QARANTINA, ALONG THE BEIRUT RIVER, IN
ASHRAHIYAH, SIN AL-FIL, FURN ASH-SHUBBAK AND AIN
AR-RUMMANEH. FATAH FORCES AND REJECTIONISTS CLASHED
IN THE PALESTINIAN CONTROLLED AREA SOUTH OF CORNICHE MAZRAA.
RAS BEIRUT, HOWEVER, WAS CALM WITH NEAR NORMAL TRAFFIC
AND BUSINESS ACTIVITY. AS OF 1030 LOCAL AUGUST 1,
THE ADF REPORTS QUIET THROUGHOUT THE CITY AND SUBURBS.

2. ARMY'S ATTEMPT TO ENTER THE SOUTH.

ARTILLERY FIRE FROM RENEGADE RIGHTISTS IN THE MARJAYOUN AREA FORCED THE LEBANESE ARMY TO HALT ITS SOUTH LEBANON CONTINGENT IN KAWKABA, SOME 25 MILES SHORT OF ITS INTENDED DESTINATION, TIBNIN. ONE LEBANESE SOLDIER WAS WOUNDED BY THE RIGHTIST SHELLING. EVEN BEFORE THE NEWS THAT THE ARMY HAD BEEN STOPPED, LEBANESE POLITICIANS WERE SPLIT OVER THE ISSUE OF THE MOVE SOUTH. THE PRIME MINISTER OFFICIALLY CALLED IT A "BLESSED MOVE." RIGHTIST CAMILLE CHAMOUN WAS SARCASTIC ABOUT MOVING THE ARMY TO THE SOUTH, "WHICH ENJOYS CALM" WHILE AREAS OF EAST BEIRUT ARE BEING BOMBARDED BY SYRIAN FORCES. SAMIR SABBAGH OF THE MURABITUN PARTY CALLED THE MOVE "INADEQUATE" BECAUSE IT DID NOT INVOLVE BRINGING RIGHTIST RENEGADES UNDER CONTROL. CONSERVATIVE MUSLIM THINKING WAS INDICATED BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER SAEB SALAM WHO WELCOMED THE MOVE, BUT CAUTIONED AGAINST EXPECTATIONS THAT THE DEPLOYMENT WOULD BE THE "ULTIMATE REMEDY FOR ALL THE ILLS OF LEBANON."

3. ADF IN HAMAT.

ACCORDING TO AN EYE-WITNESS, SYRIAN ADF SOLDIERS
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WERE OCCUPYING THE PHALANGIST AIRFIELD AT HAMAT ON JULY 30. LAST WEEK ADF FORCES SECURED HIGH GROUND AROUND THE AIRPORT, THE SOURCE SAID.

4. OTHER POLITICAL STATEMENTS AND ACTIVITY.

A. FORMER PRESIDENT SULEIMAN FRANJIYAH, FORMER PRIME MINISTER RASHID KARAMI AND PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKER KAMAL ASSAD MET IN ZGHARTA JULY 31. THE MEN ANNOUNCED ONLY THAT THEY HAD DISCUSSED WAYS TO SOLVE THE NATION'S PROBLEMS. PRESS ACCOUNTS LINKED THE MEETING TO ASSAD'S EFFORTS TO FORM AN "ANTI-PARTITION FRONT."

B. WALID JUMBLATT, THE LEADER OF THE LEFTIST PROGRESSIVE SOCIALIST PARTY, SAID THAT LEBANON WILL NOT BE SECURE UNTIL THE RIGHT-WING LEBANESE FRONT IS "BROUGHT DOWN." JUMBLATT ALSO EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR THE "ANTI-PARTITION" FORCES AND REPEATED HIS PARTY'S AND THE LEBANESE NATIONAL MOVEMENT'S OPPOSITION TO THE PRESENT FORM OF THE ARMY.

C. PHALANGE PARTY LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL THREATENED
TO SUE THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT, IN SYRIAN COURTS, FOR
"SLANDER" OVER SYRIAN MEDIA CHARGES THAT GEMAYEL AND
NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY LEADER CAMILLE CHAMOUN HAVE BEEN
COOPERATING WITH ISRAEL FOR OVER 20 YEARS.
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